



December 29, 2005

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to invite your participation in an important phone call, which will mark the inauguration of the CDC Laboratory Outreach and Communication System (LOCS), a new program to communicate with and educate the broad laboratory community on dynamic laboratory topics. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of Public Health Laboratories invite you to join us on January 24, 2006, at 11:00 AM Eastern time to share information and strategies in anticipation of testing for an emerging virulent influenza A strain. Such a new strain would potentially be a risk for a pandemic outbreak of influenza. As you well know, laboratory testing will critically underpin preparedness for, and response to, the emergence of such a strain. It is essential that public health and private sector interests are aligned as soon as possible.

Clinical laboratories play an essential role. This call will be an opportunity for leaders from a limited number of clinical laboratory professional organizations to be briefed on the current state of public health testing and surveillance for influenza, how the HHS algorithm for testing and reporting is to be used, and how assays used in the private sector should best fit into the public health response.

Prior to the call, please visit these sites to apprise yourself of relevant background materials: [http://www.aphl.org/programs/infectious\\_diseases/pandemic\\_influenza.cfm](http://www.aphl.org/programs/infectious_diseases/pandemic_influenza.cfm) and <http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/pdf/S02.pdf>. There will be ample time for questions and discussion.

Please share this information with your leadership and designate up to three additional persons for participation. Kindly forward this invitation to those individuals so that they may reply by Friday, January 20, 2006, to [jwitt@cdc.gov](mailto:jwitt@cdc.gov) or call Joyce Witt at 770-488-8131.

**Call Access Information:**

**USA Toll-Free:** 888-913-9965

**Passcode:** LOCS

**Call Date/Time:** January 24, 2006, 11:00 am EST

**Duration:** 90 minutes

Closer to the call date, we will send a confirmation e-mail including an agenda.

We look forward to your participation.

Sincerely yours,

Director  
Division of Public Health Partnerships  
National Center for Health Marketing  
Coordinating Center for Health and Information Service

Executive Director  
Association of Public Health Laboratories